Module 11: Service Plan

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Introduction and Rationale

This module assists caseworkers in developing Service Plans that support the outcomes of safety, permanency, and child well-being, as well as addressing specific case needs.
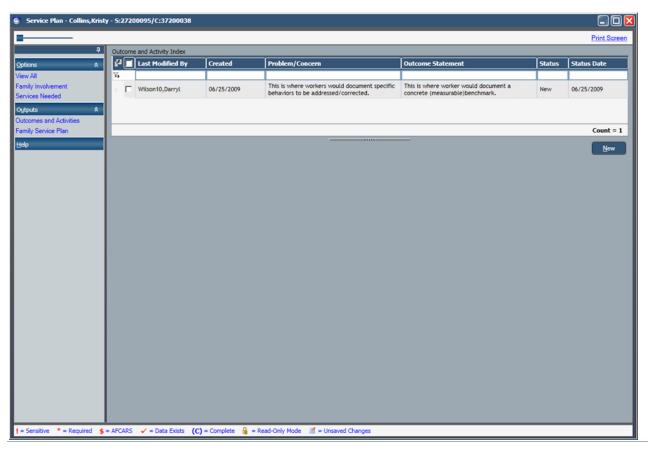
Service Plans provide a guide for action and a means of measuring progress. Clear, well-written Service Plans give direction, eliminate misunderstanding, and help the caseworker and the family to focus efforts toward a common objective. A plan that lacks clarity may cause misdirected efforts or no effort at all. Meaningful plans motivate the family and help to promote change. A plan that includes family members' input and reflects their views of the situation has a greater likelihood of success. Achievement of a desired outcome provides a sense of satisfaction and empowerment. Clearly written plans also make case evaluation easier by enabling the caseworker and the family to assess whether change has occurred, and if there is a need for continued intervention.

Remember these four key guidelines for effective service planning:

1. Service planning begins with the family and must reflect their input.
2. Outcomes evolve from problems and needs identified in the assessment.
3. Outcomes describe desired behaviors or conditions.
4. Activities are the services, actions, and steps to be taken by family members and service providers to achieve the desired outcome.

See the *Module 11 Appendix* for a checklist to evaluate family service plans.

Service Plan Window

Service Plan Window: Outcome and Activity Index

Quick Tips for Completing the Service Plan Window

- The Service Plan Window's Outcome and Activity (O&A) Index is a list of existing outcomes and activities from previously approved FASPs, along with the issues and concerns selected by the Case Planner or other Case Workers on the case in the current SNR Scales and RAP. The latter are in a temporary status for use in building new O&A Blocks. This list will serve as the starting point for the creation and updating of the current Service Plan.
- Before proceeding with the creation or update of specific O&A Blocks, be sure the O&A Index represents those issues and concerns that require attention at this time.
- After writing the Family Assessment Analysis, the caseworker should have a good idea of the most important issues, needs, and priorities in the case that require follow-up at this time. The caseworker can click the Assessment Summary button at the bottom of the Service Plan window to view what has already been written on the Family Assessment Analysis window without having to navigate back through CONNECTIONS.
- Review the O&A Index to ensure it represents the most significant case issues at this time. If necessary, the caseworker can add additional problems that need to be addressed by clicking

the New button at the bottom of the window to list issues that may have been identified in other parts of the FASP (e.g., FC Issues, Non-LDSS Custody - Relative/Resource Placement Custody, Life Skills Assessment, or Discharge Planning windows).

- If there are duplicate items on the list, or items that do not need follow-up at this time, delete those that are not needed. If more than one adult or more than one child is experiencing a similar problem, and that problem will be addressed separately or differently in the Service Plan, the caseworker may need to create a separate entry for each in the O&A Index. If applicable, issues that will be addressed within one set of activities can be combined.
- Once satisfied that the O&A Index accurately reflects current case issues that need to be addressed, the caseworker can edit or update O&A Blocks by clicking the O & A Block Details button at the bottom of the window.
- The caseworker can add to or amend the list at any point, up to submitting the FASP for approval. Once the updates on the finished O&A Blocks have been made, be sure that the Service Plan accurately and thoroughly represents the most significant problems, issues, and concerns in the case at this time.
- After creating all necessary O&A Blocks, document the family involvement and/or services needed by clicking the respective buttons.

Service Plan: Outcome and Activity Window (Block/Problem Statements)

Quick Tips for Completing the Outcome and Activity Window (Block/Problem Statements)

- Before completing this window, be sure to review the Service Plan Window's O&A Index for accuracy and thoroughness. This ensures that the overall Service Plan is consistent with the most significant problems, issues, and concerns in the case as described in the assessment portions of the FASP. A problem or concern should not appear for the first time in the Service Plan without first having been identified and described on the Family Assessment Analysis window of the FASP.
- A well-written Problem Statement includes:
    - A clear description of the behavior or condition that needs to change (i.e., Who is doing what?)
    - The underlying conditions and contributing factors (i.e., Why are they doing this?)
    - The impact on the children (i.e., How does it affect the children's safety, permanency, and well-being?)
- The Problem Statement should be written in such a way that both the caseworker and the family have a clear, mutual understanding of the behavior or circumstance targeted for change.
- For new O&A Blocks created from items selected in the SNR Scales or RAP, the Problem Statement will pre-fill with the anchor descriptor that was carried forward. These statements are generic. The caseworker will need to amend the anchor descriptor to write a customized behavioral statement that more clearly reflects the specific behavior or circumstance that is the

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focus of this O&A Block. The comments associated with each element in the SNR Scales and RAP can be helpful in developing the Problem Statement.

- For other new O&A Blocks, the caseworker will need to write a Problem Statement. The description of the problems or concerns in other parts of the FASP (e.g., FC issues, Non-LDSS Custody - Relative/Resource Placement Custody, Life Skills Assessment, or Discharge Planning windows) can be helpful in developing the Problem Statement.
- For existing O&A Blocks, the Problem Statement will carry forward from the previous FASP. The caseworker can leave it as it is, or modify it for clarity to more accurately reflect the current situation. The caseworker should be careful when modifying a Problem Statement, to ensure that the modified statement does not address a new issue.

Service Plan: Outcome and Activity Window (Block/Outcome Statements)

Quick Tips for Completing the Outcome and Activity Window (Block/Outcome Statements)

An Outcome Statement is a description of progress; it is not merely participation in a service. It is the result of participation in a service, or set of activities.

It is best when caseworkers and family members develop outcomes together. This promotes shared ownership of the plan and a clearer understanding of expectations. When defining outcomes, caseworkers and families should strive for stating what is to be achieved. Mutual understanding is supported when the language used in the Outcome Statement reflects words and phrases typically used by the caseworker and family when discussing concerns and needs in the family.

Well-written Outcome Statements are:

- Clear, concrete, and specific
- Behavioral and observable
- Realistic and attainable
- Time-limited

If the caseworker encounters difficulties when writing Outcome Statements, he/she may try one of the following:

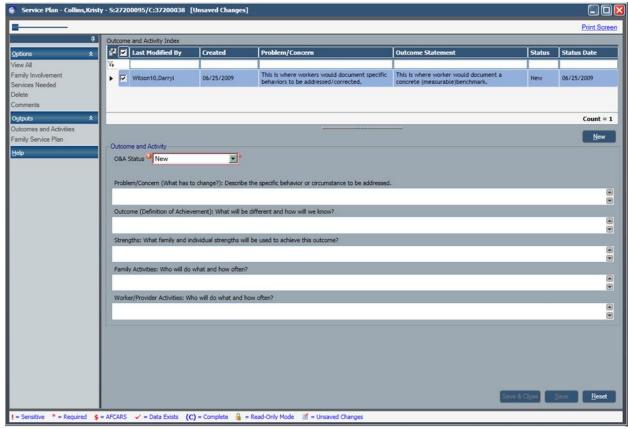- Imagine what the family will do consistently and over time that shows progress or change.

- Describe what the family would be able to do if they successfully complete a program or service.
- Ask the family to describe what success would look like.
- For an intangible result (e.g., improved self-esteem or ability to show empathy), imagine or ask the client to describe what this would look like in a form that someone could observe.

Service Plan: Outcome and Activity Window (Block/Strengths)

Quick Tips for Completing the Outcome and Activity Window (Block/Strengths)
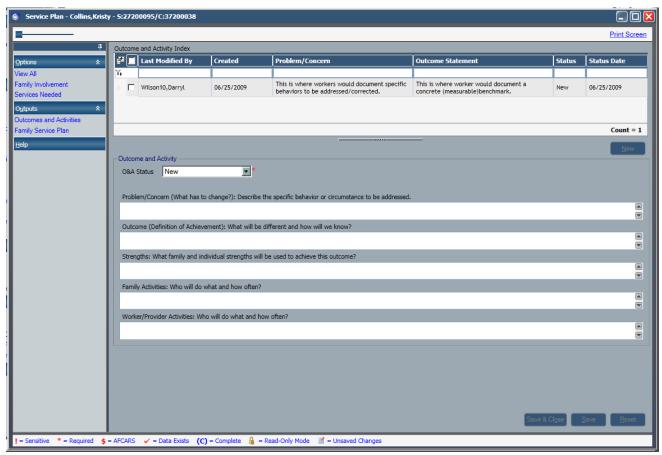
Before completing this window, review the strengths and resources listed on the Family Assessment Analysis window. (Click the Assessment Summary button at the bottom of the Service Plan window to view what has already been written on the Family Assessment Analysis window without having to navigate back through CONNECTIONS.) Strengths used in the Service Plan should include, but need not be limited to, items listed on the Family Assessment Analysis window. Also look in the SNR Scales for evidence of strengths that may be used to promote and support change in the family.

- Think creatively. Are there other strengths, resources, or opportunities not already identified on the Family Assessment Analysis window or in the SNR Scales that can be used to achieve this outcome? List them here.
- Strengths and resources listed in the Strengths field should relate directly to the specific Outcome Statement identified above on this window. Do not list strengths randomly.
- Think of strengths and resources as building blocks, or opportunities for change.
- Consider possible strengths in these key areas:
  - Attitudes and beliefs
  - Knowledge and information
  - Behaviors and skills
  - Resources

- If the caseworker encounters difficulties, he/she should imagine the outcome, or ask the client to imagine himself/herself achieving the outcome.
- The caseworker should ask himself/herself, what does the client/family already possess that can promote achievement of this result?
    - A belief that they are capable of overcoming their addiction?
    - Basic knowledge of child development?
    - Skill at asking for what they want?
    - A person who can provide concrete help or encouragement?
- What else is needed to achieve this outcome? Does the client already possess it, or can the caseworker help them obtain it?
    - A belief that a treatment program can be helpful?
    - Knowledge of relapse prevention strategies?
    - Skills in managing anger or anxiety?
    - Access to transportation?

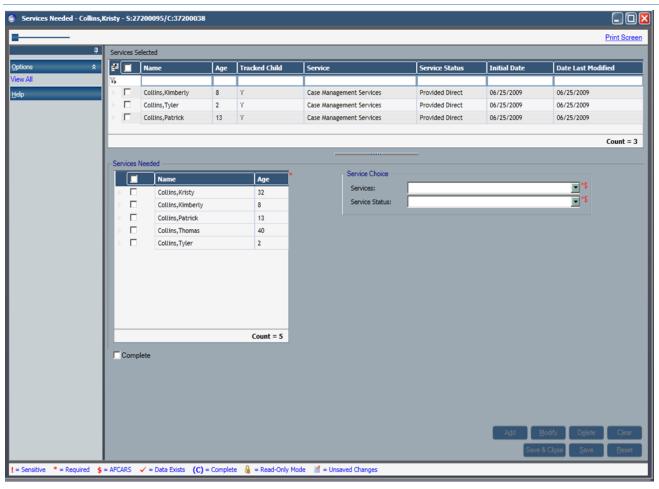## Service Plan: Outcome and Activity Window (Block/Activities)

Quick Tips for Completing the Outcome and Activity Window (Block/Activities)

- Activities must relate to and help address the specific problem described above.
- Activities should be specific, measurable, realistic, and time limited.
- Use words that have shared meaning; avoid jargon.
- Avoid words that imply an imbalance of power. For example, "Caseworker will *monitor* client's progress."
- Instead, use words that connote team. For example, "Caseworker will *discuss* with mother her successes and challenges in using the new discipline techniques.
- Utilize family and individual strengths, resources, and motivations to promote and support change.
- Have family members identify services that would be helpful, and steps they can take to achieve the desired outcome.
- Have family members identify resources in their family or community that can be used to achieve the desired outcome.
- Be sure to include activities for everyone who has a part in helping to achieve a particular outcome (e.g., children, foster parents, childcare workers, school counselors).
- Develop activities that help family members claim ownership. For example, "Lisa will identify her own criteria for a babysitter for her children. Henry (age 17) will list the qualities he wants in an apartment mate."

- Be sure to include service provider activities that promote and support family members' change efforts.
- Use resources creatively. Look for ways that family, friends, and community helpers can be resources. Often times, these are more effective and lasting than more formal approaches to intervention.
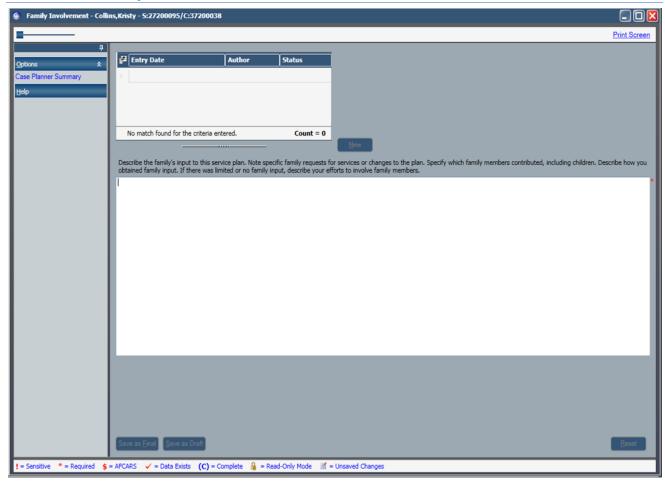
Service Plan: Services Needed Window

Quick Tips for Completing the Services Needed Window

- From the Services drop-down list, select specific services needed, or to be provided to each family member. Be sure the selected services address the problems, needs, issues, and concerns described on the Family Assessment Analysis window and in the Service Plan.
- If services being provided do not support at least one of the outcomes in the Service Plan, go back and look at the information on the Family Assessment Analysis window. Either the assessment information or the Service Plan needs to be adjusted.
- Are there known problems missing from the SNR Scales or the Family Assessment Analysis window? If so, these need to be added to the assessment information to complete the picture of this family's needs, and to justify the need for the associated service.
- Are there services for which there is no identified need? Perhaps those services should be discontinued.

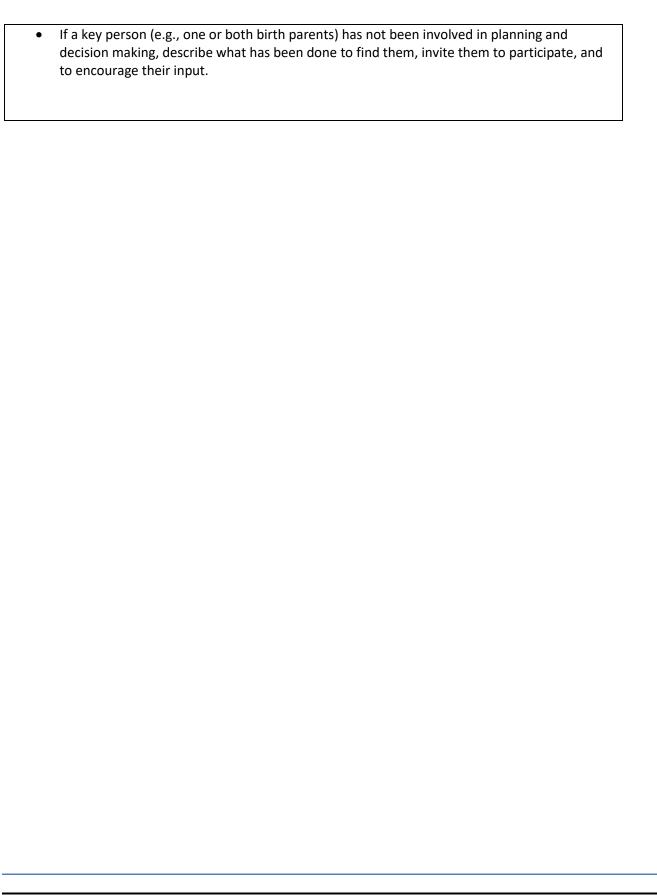## Service Plan: Family Involvement Window

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Quick Tips for Completing the Family Involvement Window

This is one of five narratives in the FASP that should include input by the Case Planner and by any providers assigned to the case with a CONNECTIONS role of Case Worker. The Case Planner is ultimately responsible for the accuracy and thoroughness of this narrative. For help in understanding who may need to contribute to this narrative, see the Case Update tab in *Module 4: Family Update Window*.

Briefly describe the following:

- Who in the family had input into the above Service Plan (e.g., birth mother or father, parent partners, children)?
- How did they have input (e.g., face-to-face contact with caseworker, by phone or letter, via case conference, in court, through their lawyer)?
- What specifically was their input? What are their priorities? What services, if any, did they request? What services, if any, did they refuse? What changes to the plan have they requested? What suggestions did they make?

- If a key person (e.g., one or both birth parents) has not been involved in planning and decision making, describe what has been done to find them, invite them to participate, and to encourage their input.

11A: A Checklist for Evaluating the Family Service Plan

Rate each item according to the following scales: 1=not satisfactory, 2=acceptable, 3=excellent.

		Rating:
		____
1.	All members of the family were invited to provide input into both the assessment and the plan.	
		____
2.	The family was provided with information on when the plans would be developed.	
		____
3.	The family clearly understands the purpose of the plan.	
		____
4.	The plan is written in clear, jargon-free language that the family understands.	
		____
5.	The plan is congruent with the information gathered during the assessment process, captured in the assessment protocols, and synthesized during the analysis.	
		____
6.	The plan identifies the behaviors or conditions that need to change.	
		____
7.	The planned outcomes and activities target the underlying conditions and contributing factors that create and sustain those behaviors and conditions.	
		____
8.	The plan addresses/continues to address the safety concerns.	
		____
9.	The plan identifies risk reduction activities and services.	
		____
10.	The plan supports the family in achieving their outcomes.	
		____
11.	The plan includes ways of creating change.	
		____
12.	The plan reflects the strengths and resources within the family or its environment.	

13. The plan reflects an understanding or exploration of the family's   ____
    uniqueness, including culture.

14. The family understands the outcomes and their role in achieving them.   ____

15. The plan strengthens parental functioning.   ____

16. The worker's/service provider's activities support outcome achievement   ____
    clearly and specifically.

17. The amount of work planned for both family and service providers during ____
    this service period is realistic.

18. The parties will be able to verify when/whether outcomes/activities are ____
    achieved.

19. If children are in foster care, the plan and case record includes evidence ____
    of discussion of timelines for plan achievement, other permanency
    options if plan is not achieved, and involvement of the foster parents in
    the service plan review process.

For any items rated "unsatisfactory," what steps can you take to improve the effectiveness of the plan?